

Federal shutdown impacts rural Northwest

By KATY NESBITT
For the EO Media Group

As the partial federal government shutdown continues into its fourth week, some rural Northwest communities are feeling the pinch.

In western Oregon wolves are under federal protection, but federal employees assigned to monitoring them with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and USDA Wildlife Services are on furlough. Steve Niemela, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife district fish biologist in Central Point, said his office is feeling the added pressure.

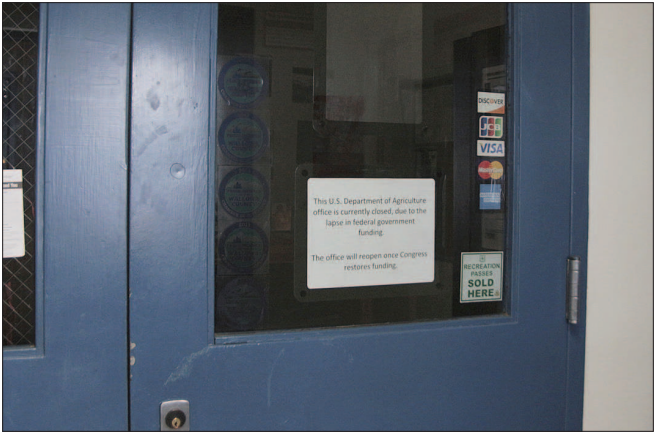
“It has an impact on us,” Niemela said. “We can’t coordinate effectively — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the lead agency in wolf management.”

He said state and federal biologists follow a “good set of guidelines,” but the furlough makes it challenging.

Niemela said much of the habitat restoration planning for Oregon’s fish and wildlife is also on hold as many of the projects are on land managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

“Just about everything we do, there is some sort of federal nexus,” Niemela said.

In northeastern Oregon, federal funding to pay employees of the Tri-County Weed Management Area



For the EO Media Group/Katy Nesbitt
The Wallowa Mountains office in Joseph has a discreet sign explaining the current federal budget impasse.

hasn’t been received, according to Susan Roberts, Wallowa County Commission chairwoman, so Baker, Union and Wallowa County leaders are looking for supplemental money, possibly in the form of a bridge loan.

“We are finding a way around the federal reimbursements to keep our folks paid,” Roberts said. “They still have bills to pay, but we can’t get reimbursed.”

Ongoing talks regarding the Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision with Glenn Casamassa, U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Regional forester, are also on hold. Roberts had hoped to talk to him during the Association of Oregon Counties meeting Monday in Salem regarding the plan’s progress, but he was unable to attend because of the furlough.

While most Forest Service grazing allotment permittees are not running cattle on public land in January, Rod Childers, who ranches in northern Wallowa County, said he normally has had his annual operating instruction meeting by now.

“I get mine done first part of January so I don’t have to deal with it before calving, but that isn’t going to happen,” Childers said. “Now I’m concerned about getting it done in time for turnout in the spring.”

With calving season on his mind, Childers said he also worries about the Wildlife Services field agents who control predators being furloughed at his cattle’s most vulnerable time.

As of Tuesday afternoon, there appeared to be no end in sight to the shutdown. Rep.

Greg Walden, R-Ore., said he agrees with the president’s case for increased border security, but he didn’t support shutting down natural resource agencies.

“I don’t agree that it makes sense to furlough the people working on the biological opinion in the Klamath Basin, forest fuels reductions in central Oregon, or grazing permits in eastern Oregon,” Walden said. “How does a nearly monthlong work stoppage benefit taxpayers who are waiting for decisions and plans and permits?”

Walden isn’t the only Oregon representative concerned about the shutdown’s effects on natural resource agencies. Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley were two of the signers on a letter sent to the president Jan. 14 urging him to fund the agencies responsible for wildfire suppression.

The letter, signed by 12 senators, said, “The failure to reopen the government puts peoples’ lives at risk by undermining their ability to respond to wildfires and will only serve to delay critical forest restoration and safety projects. These young men and women put their lives on the line to protect the nation’s natural resources and other public and private property, and they deserve to have the best training possible in preparation for increasingly difficult fire seasons.”

State board passes rules for Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

By GEORGE PLAVEN
EO Media Group

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board has approved new administrative rules for a voluntary state grant program to protect and preserve working farms and ranches.

Established by lawmakers in 2017, the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program was conceived to address the increasing fragmentation and conversion of farmland — an issue that simultaneously threatens natural resources, such as fish and wildlife habitat supported by agriculture, officials say.

An 11-person Agricultural Heritage Commission met six times in 2018 to write the program rules, setting in place grants to help pay for conservation planning, easements, succession planning and technical assistance. OWEB approved the rules at a board meeting Tuesday, Jan. 15 in Cannon Beach.

Nellie McAdams, Farm

Preservation Program director for the nonprofit Rogue Farm Corps, worked with the Agricultural Heritage Commission to coordinate membership and meetings. She said farm preservation is one of the biggest challenges facing rural Oregon economies.

“At this point, we are seeing a major transition of agricultural lands,” McAdams said. “This would provide the funding to help with that planning, and hand off viable farmland to the next generation.”

The average age of Oregon farmers is now 60, up from 55 in 2002, according to a 2016 study by Oregon State University and Portland State University. As older farmers start to retire, more than 10 million acres, or 64 percent, of Oregon’s agricultural lands are poised to change ownership over the next two decades.

The Agricultural Heritage Program is Oregon’s first attempt at awarding grants to keep working lands in pro-

duction, which in turn benefits the fish and wildlife habitat they support.

“(The commission) sees it as integrating agriculture and natural resource benefits,” McAdams said. “They don’t see them as competing. They see them as helping each other.”

The program is supported by a broad coalition of farm and natural resources advocacy groups, including the Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Cattlemen’s Association, Sustainable Northwest, The Nature Conservancy, 1000 Friends of Oregon, the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts and Oregon Association of Conservation Districts.

The next step is for the Oregon Legislature to approve funding for the program. State Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, and Rep. Brad Witt, D-Clatskanie, will co-sponsor a bill seeking \$10 million to fully implement the program.

“Oregon’s working lands are a critical economic driver

for the state and it’s important that we preserve our irreplaceable natural resources,” Hansell said in a statement. “I am pleased that OWEB approved these rules so that we are ready to help farmers and ranchers preserve working landscapes and promote resilient rural communities.”

With broad bipartisan support from lawmakers, McAdams said she is optimistic about the bill passing, even as the state faces a budget crunch in 2019.

If the funding passes, OWEB will then decide when to release applications for the grants. McAdams said the program would also help farmers and ranchers secure matching federal dollars for agricultural easements and conservation through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

“We have a huge opportunity,” she said. “This would be a way to leverage a small amount of funds from a state program to bring in a large amount of federal funds.”

DEATH NOTICES

Robert A. Cook Jr.
Pendleton
Jan. 5, 1945 — Jan. 12, 2019

Robert A. Cook Jr., 74, of Pendleton, died Saturday, Jan. 12, 2019, in Portland. He was born Jan. 5, 1945, in Billings, Montana. Arrangements are with Pendleton Pioneer Chapel, Folsom-Bishop.

Robert E. ‘Bob’ Harvey
Wickenburg, Ariz.
Oct. 29, 1946 — Jan. 16, 2019

Former Pendleton resident Robert E. ‘Bob’ Harvey, 72, died Jan. 16, 2019, in Wickenburg, Ariz. He was born Oct. 29, 1946, in Pendleton. Disposition was by cremation. A celebration of life is planned for September 2019.

Shirley Ann Hutchison
Hermiston
April 19, 1938 — Jan. 14, 2019

Shirley Ann Hutchison, 80, of Hermiston, died Monday, Jan. 14, 2019, in Walla Walla. She was born April 19, 1938, in Ft. Indiantown Gap, Pa. A memorial service will be held Saturday, Jan. 26 at 1 p.m. at Burns Mortuary chapel in Hermiston. Burns Mortuary of Hermiston is in care of final arrangements. View the full obituary or leave an online condolence for the family at www.burnsmortuaryhermiston.com

Michael Patrick Gallegos
Hermiston
Sept. 3, 1971 — Jan. 15, 2019

Michael Patrick Gallegos, 47, of Hermiston, died Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019, near Hermiston. He was born Sept. 3, 1971, in Rupert, Idaho. Recitation of the rosary will be held Wednesday, Jan. 23 at 1 p.m. at Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church in Hermiston. A memorial mass will begin at 1:30 p.m., also at Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church. Burial will follow at Hermiston Cemetery. View the full obituary or to leave an online condolence for the family at www.burnsmortuaryhermiston.com

UPCOMING SERVICES

FRIDAY, JAN. 18
CAMPBELL, IRIS — Graveside service at 1 p.m. at the Lexington Cemetery.
SATURDAY, JAN. 19
BAUM, PERCY — Services at 11 a.m. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1821 S. Second Ave., Walla Walla. Interment will follow at 2 p.m. at Skyview Memorial Park, 70116 S. Highway 395, Pendleton.
PULLEN, GAIL — Celebration of life at 1 p.m. at Life Tributes (Mueller’s), 314 W. First Ave., Kennewick, Wash.
SCHRODER, KATY — Celebration service at 2 p.m. at the United Church of Christ, 110 S. Church St., Condon.

LOTTERY

Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019	Lucky Lines
Megabucks	04-07-09-14-FREE-17-24-25-32
16-21-29-38-46-48	Estimated jackpot: \$18,000
Estimated jackpot: \$6.9 million	Powerball
Powerball	Pick 4
14-29-31-56-61	1 p.m.: 3-8-5-3
Powerball: 1	4 p.m.: 5-6-1-8
Power Play: 2	7 p.m.: 5-0-6-3
Estimated jackpot: \$112 million	10 p.m.: 3-6-5-3
Win for Life	Thursday, Jan. 17, 2019
11-19-22-44	Pick 4
	1 p.m.: 0-6-4-8

Good Shepherd welcomes new speech therapy manager

East Oregonian

Good Shepherd Health Care System’s speech-language pathology department has a new manager.

Heidii Roberts, speech-language pathologist, will head up the department. She comes from the Portland metro area, where she has run her own practice for the past 10 years.

According to a news release from Good Shepherd, Roberts has a particu-

lar passion for working with children with autism.

“There is nothing more rewarding for me than getting silly and teaching them about social skills and how to be flexible,” she said in a statement. “I also care for individuals with tongue thrust and lisping articulation, and I plan to contribute my experience with Orofacial Myofunctional Therapy (OMT).”

OMT is used to treat individuals with orofacial myofunctional disorders, which

interfere with the development of bones and muscles around the face and mouth, in some cases causing problems with speech.

Roberts and her husband have two daughters, who also work in the medical field. Roberts said she applied for the Hermiston position because she was ready for a change of scenery, and she enjoys the friendliness of Eastern Oregon.

Speech-Language Therapy, at 600 N.W. 11th St., Suite E-25, is accepting referrals. For more information call 541-667-3635.

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PENDLETON CENTER for the ARTS

SHOP SHOP

Church Women United to install officers

MILTON-FREEWATER — Refreshments, fellowship and the installation of officers is planned for the upcoming meeting of Church Women United.

The gathering is Thursday, Jan. 24 at 1:30 p.m. at the First Christian Church, 518 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater. Everyone is welcome to attend.

For more information, contact Helen Richartz at helen_jack@columbiainet.com.

PUBLIC SAFETY
WEDNESDAY
12:24 a.m. — The Morrow County Sheriff’s Office responded to Northeast Riverside Avenue, Hep-pner, after a caller reported her son was having a conflict with a woman. The parties told the deputy they would try to calm down for the night.
6:55 a.m. — A Heppner father reported his teen son refused to go to school and injured his wife.
10:26 a.m. — A resident on Cowlitz Lane, Umatilla, waved down the code enforcement officer to complain about a barking dog.
12:22 p.m. — Umatilla

police responded to Dean Avenue and Raymond Street for a burglary.
2:55 p.m. — A Stanfield resident on Main Street complained about the neighbor’s pit bull dog barking all the time.
7:44 p.m. — The Morrow County Sheriff’s Office responded to a report of a suicidal person in Irrigon. Deputies found the person was not suicidal and was aware of counseling resources.
8:32 p.m. — Hermiston police received a 911 report of a restraining order violation on West Eskimo Avenue.

St. Anthony Provider Spotlight



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